

## **FEDERAL EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR AWARDS**

### **Chicago Federal Executive Board Announces 2017 Award Winners**

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#### **CHICAGO – May 4, 2017**

The Chicago Federal Executive Board is pleased to announce the winners of the 60<sup>th</sup> Annual Federal Employee of the Year Awards in anticipation of Public Service Recognition Week, May 7-13, 2017.

Federal Executive Boards coordinate programs between federal agencies outside the beltway. Through the combined efforts of our regional senior federal leadership, we:

- Provide communication during emergencies, including disasters and terrorist threats
- Foster collaboration among Federal agencies, state, and local governments
- Connect to our community through outreach projects
- Provide local training and workplace solutions for our workforce, including mediation
- Facilitate large interagency projects fostering collaboration among federal agencies

Employees were nominated from among the 55,000 Federal workers in more than 170 agencies throughout Chicagoland. Recognition of the winners - employees and teams – is a testament to the exceptional service and contributions they provided to our community.

The FEB awards represent the broad spectrum of federal roles, ranging from individuals and teams working in specialized, highly technical science, technology, engineering, medical, legal, law enforcement, and research to public-facing roles in agencies such as the Social Security Administration, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Medicare and Medicaid Centers. Our federal workforce years of service represented ranged from 2 to 40 years.

Winners were selected by a panel of judges from local agency directors who did not have nominees in that category. The judges identified those who stood out for their extraordinary service to the public. In total, the FEB will celebrate 380 nominees and 10 overall winners who had the greatest impact in the Chicago region. Our winners are diligent, committed public servants and citizens, giving of their time and talents each day.

Congratulations to everyone, nominees and employees.

### **2017 EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNERS**

#### **Agency of the Year**

##### **Naval Station Great Lakes, Department of Defense**

Naval Station Great Lakes achieved the Department of the Navy's highest 5-Star Accreditation for morale, welfare and recreation, and conducted 82 community outreach events, totaling over 45,700 man-hours of volunteerism. Employees volunteered more than 1,890 hours tutoring and mentoring students and assisting in classrooms during 5 months at 8 area schools. They established a new National Museum of the American Sailor and sustained the Secretary of the Navy Energy Award Program Gold Standard, reducing energy costs by over \$12 million.

### **Career Achievement**

#### **Susan Leszkowicz, Railroad Retirement Board, Inspector General**

Over 40 years Susan Leszkowicz has identified hundreds of recommendations to improve the information technology security of the Railroad Retirement Board, covering areas that include configuration baselines, hardware and software inventories, privacy assessments, and the development of comprehensive risk management governance structure. She has also taught numerous auditors in this complex and ever evolving area, encouraging them to seek further certifications and promotions.

### **John F. Kennedy Leadership**

#### **Brad Buoy, Social Security Administration**

Brad Buoy led three IT teams that provided outstanding service and products to the region and nation. Through his outstanding leadership, his regional development team created innovative tools such as an electronic visitor intake program, an alternative service and appeals tool, an electronic tool to track trainee proficiency, and a customer service-tracking tool.

Brad's teams maintained over 80 applications, half of which have been rolled out nationally, as well as 300 applications that are critical to the success of SSA staff. Brad's leadership was also critical in innovate pilot projects including flexible video (using laptop cameras and Skype) to conduct video interviews. This process saved more than \$50,000 in travel expenses in Illinois alone.

### **Call to Service**

#### **Amy Ramirez, U.S. Navy**

Amy Ramirez played a crucial and invaluable role in developing an Operational Plan (OPLAN) to provide concrete and synchronized milestones, tasks, and deliverables for the entire command for the next five years, which will result in the achievement of the Secretary of Defense Force of the Future vision for an all-digital applicant processing system. Amy's strong, calm leadership, and contagious desire to see through to completion, something so essential, were valuable to her command.

### **Citizen Services Employee**

#### **Holiday Wirick, Environmental Protection Agency**

Since 2005, Holiday Wirick has coordinated a highly-successful year-end food and clothing drive for the Pacific Garden Mission, a homeless shelter that has been providing food and clothing to Chicago's homeless since 1877. Acting on her initiative, she collected donations from colleagues at the Chicago office of EPA Region 5 and then delivered the donations herself to the shelter. This year, Holly collected 60 boxes of clothing and 15 boxes of food. She has collected and delivered to the Mission a total of 726 boxes of donations since she began the food and clothing drive.

### **Citizen Services Team**

#### **Uninsured Outreach Mapping Tool Team, Department of Health and Human Services**

The Department of Health and Human Services, Uninsured Outreach Mapping Tool Team created a nationally recognized tool used to connect the uninsured to safety net services and coverage such as the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). The tool permits interested stakeholders in maximizing community outreach to geographic areas where the need for safety net services is high. The Region V offices of Health Resources and Services Administration

(HRSA), Office of the Regional Director, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and HRSA Office of Information Technology joined forces to develop the tool. Its use continues to spread across the country to help providers connect those in greatest need to healthcare services and coverage.

### **Homeland Security and Law Enforcement Team**

#### **Federal Protective Services, District 1 Operations**

When there is a bomb threat, most federal employees evacuate, but our brave men and women of FPS go *into* the building. FPS was selected winner for sustained excellence in keeping our community safe while concurrently supporting high-profile events in other regions. Events included: Operation Ocean Breeze; the 2016 Republican National Convention in Cleveland, OH; Operation Nefarious, a high-profile terrorist trail in New York, NY; the visit of Pope Francis to Philadelphia, PA; and the Cubs World Series Championship Parade in Chicago, IL.

### **Management Excellence**

#### **Kenneth Hogbin, Naval Station Great Lakes**

Kenneth Hogbin established a communications working group, bringing together all stakeholders in creating a common communications plan that allowed interoperability within the Enterprise Land Mobile Radio (ELMR) network, greatly increasing first responder coordination capabilities, including alignment with the Regional Dispatch Center. And that was just one of the many contributions he made. Kenneth was critical to the successful installation and roll out of the Defense Biometric Identification System at Naval Station Great Lakes. With no local network engineer or contractor support, he defined all the technical requirements necessary for installation, operational testing, and eventual usage at Entry Controls Points, security forces headquarters, and Visitor Center Pass and ID office.

### **Mission Support Employee**

#### **Miguel Del Toral, Environmental Protection Agency**

Miguel Del Toral led EPA's response to the Flint, MI water crisis where nearly 100,000 people were unable to drink water from the tap for months. He provided expert technical knowledge of lead in drinking water to determine the extent of the problem in Flint, and researched solutions to restore clean drinking water to the community. Del Toral spent more than 600 hours in Flint leading the sampling effort: maintaining an effective field team, answering sampling team questions, making on-the-spot decisions as complex issues arose, and taking samples at residences.

### **Mission Support Team**

#### **Presidential Library Staging Team, General Services Administration**

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) is responsible for storing and maintaining records and objects for the Presidential Library of every outgoing U.S. President. GSA procured leased space for NARA to temporarily store items from the Obama Administration until the Obama Presidential Library is completed. The leased space provides storage, scanning, a sensitive compartmented information facility (SCIF), and office space. When the original design exceeded funds available from NARA, the GSA team managed a de-scoping effort to reduce the budget and then evaluated the lease requirements to ensure shell and

tenant improvement costs were properly allocated before providing a funding request at the reduced amount. The project's total cost was \$5.8 million.

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